

**COPING BEHAVIOR OF JOHN NASH IN RON HOWARD'S
A BEAUTIFUL MIND MOVIE:
AN INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**



Research Paper

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Getting Bachelor
Degree of English Department in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

by:

NANA APRIANA KARYAWATI

A 320 060 174

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
2010**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Every person has ever felt anxiety in his life even once. This situation happened as people interact with other people that sometimes, the stronger power innervates her or him that finally pressure results un-good feeling or uncomfortable condition into the weaker one. That is why people will struggle to get freedom no matter what he or she tries to effort as long as he or she can try to overcome.

That phenomenon really happens in human daily life, the director tries to transfer it into the film or cinema. The cinema always performs the situation that has happened in the certain time in order to reveal the reality in human life. Beside that, film gives audience an understanding about the essence of life and contributes to the understanding of the reality of life in order to be sensible. The problem which is usually in the film is the characterization which indicates anxious feeling, disappointment and his or her withdrawal from social interaction. That is why there are some directors who displace the realism of life into film through the screenplay.

One of directors who transfer the reality in to the screenplay is Ron Howard. Ron was born in Oklahoma, into an acting family, his father had realized a boyhood dream of acting by attending the University of Oklahoma and majoring in drama, and his mother went through acting school in New

York. He was in his first movie at 18 months, *Frontier Woman* (1956), although his first real part was at the age of 4. Soon a regular on "Playhouse 90" (1956), he was cast as Opie on "*The Andy Griffith Show*" (1960), and later moved from a child in Mayberry to America's teenager as Richie Cunningham in "*Happy Days*" (1974). The life of a child star is certainly not routine, but Ron's parents wanted his life to be as normal as possible - he attended public schools and at age 15 even took nine months off to play a basketball season. The transition from child actor to adult actor is always difficult, but for Ron the real transition was from child actor to adult director. There were some film roles, such as *The Shootist* (1976) for which he received a Golden Globe nomination, but his dream and now his focus was directing. He had begun shooting films at age 15 with a Super-8 camera, and after high school spent two years in a film program at the University of Southern California, but then left, feeling he could learn more from actual experience. That first film was the hardest to finance, but he struck a deal with Roger Corman - he would star in *Eat My Dust* (1976) and Corman would produce *Grand Theft Auto* (1977) which Howard would direct (he also wrote the script and starred). It was a success, and his directorial career was jump-started. Married since 1975 to his high school sweetheart, he, in 1997, is enjoying a life of telling stories as one of Hollywood's top directors. (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000165/>)

A Beautiful Mind is directed by Ron Howard. *A Beautiful Mind* is a film which extends far beyond the 2 hours and 15 minutes viewing it in the theater. Ron Howard contributes truly inspiring work to this film, and he

hopes that the critics remember him when awards are being given out. *A Beautiful Mind* does all it can to change that, and it succeeds. Unless they are familiar with John Nash's story, they probably won't guess he is schizophrenic until part-way into the movie. He is eccentric, abrupt, and highly intelligent, but does not seem crazy. His delusions are as real as reality to Nash, and likewise, they are real to the audience, who cannot tell the difference between truth and delusion.

In *A Beautiful Mind* the major character, John Nash goes through a myriad of highs and lows from his time as a Mathematics student in graduate school at Princeton in the late 1940's to his Nobel Prize win for Economics in 1994. A brilliant but somewhat arrogant and antisocial man, Nash preferred to spend his time with his thoughts, which were primarily of seeing mathematical formula associated with everyday occurrences, than with people. Two people he did make a connection with were Charles, his roommate at Princeton, and Alicia Larde, one of his students when he was teaching at M.I.T. in the early 1950's. He and Alicia eventually marry. As time goes on, Nash lives more and more within himself which causes major problems in his life. But Alicia stands by her husband to his redemption to the Nobel Prize win. Nash learns that his graduate school colleagues, with whom he had a cordial but somewhat distant relationship, are closer friends than he imagined, although in his later life he really does miss Charles' company more than anything despite knowing that spending time with Charles is not in his or anyone's best interest.

Incidentally, he came across a review from a "professional critic" who blasted *A Beautiful Mind* for including "all that spying stuff that had nothing to do with Nash's work that was thrown in for Hollywood thrill." He feels bad for that chap, since he missed the entire point of the film. But that just proves Ron Howard's genius in creating a picture of insanity indistinguishable from reality. There are some truly shocking moments in *A Beautiful Mind*. When Alicia finds her husband's secret cache of newspaper clippings behind their house, she was eerily reminded of Jack Nicholson's wife in *The Shining* discovering his endless, type written pages of the same phrase. The scene that follows, culminating with Nash's realization that his delusions are indeed a false reality is brilliant. In a moment, remembering Marcee, Nash has a flash of insight, and he finally accepts his illness ironically, through his intellect. When Nash imagines that someone is going to harm Alicia, he through his eyes and sees how a seemingly senseless act of violence is a gesture of love, filtered through the smog of delusion.

Now take on the acting: Superb in every sense of the word. Russell Crowe is incredible. He can not stress that enough. There is never any question about the authenticity of his character. Crowe does not rely on his elaborate makeup to age Nash -- his walk, words, and voice do that elegantly in the movie's end. Crowe will get at least another Oscar nomination out of this one. And, he better win. Jennifer Connelly is amazing as well. And when Crowe and Connelly are put together, extraordinary chemistry erupts, they just gel together, and they really belong with one another. Some people have had

problems with the romance part of the movie, saying that the way John and Alicia even started seeing each other wasn't very realistic and why Alicia would stay with John after he becomes distant.

Nash grows older and approaches his old friend and intellectual rival Martin Hansen, now head of the Princeton mathematics department, who grants him permission to work out of the library and audit classes, though the university will not provide him with his own office. Though Nash still suffers from hallucinations and mentions taking newer medications, he is ultimately able to live with and largely ignore his psychotic episodes. He takes his situation in stride and humorously checks to ensure that any new acquaintances are in fact real people, not hallucinations.

Learning from the figure that has stated on that story above, the researcher finds the reason to study *A Beautiful Mind* movie by using an individual psychological approach. In this research, the researcher will concern to the character of John Nash to be analyzed in how he copes with the life problems he faces. His coping behavior indirectly changes his personality. He experiences a complex problem that begins when he is eccentric, abrupt, and highly intelligent, but does not seem crazy. His delusions are as real as reality to Nash, and likewise, they are real to the audience, who cannot tell the difference between truth and delusion. All of his problems take him a long journey that influences his personality.

B. Literature Review

The first study was conducted by Ahmad Aris Kurniawan (2010) entitled: *Anxiety of John Nash in Ron Howard's A Beautiful Mind Movie: Psychoanalytic Approach*. In his research he used Sigmund Freud theory. The writer emphasizes the analysis on relating the structure of the work to the large structure of the social realities in which the work was made. The writer would like to present previous research related to the movie with different approach. It will focus on the coping behavior of the major character to cope his life problems: an individual psychological approach.

To fulfill the aim of this research and to limit this analysis, the researcher will focus on analyzing the major character John Nash in Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie.

C. Problem Statement

In this research, the writer proposes a single problem statement. The problem of the research is how John Nash as the main character of Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie copes his life problems.

D. Limitation of the Study

This study will not cover the personality of all characters, but it will only focus on the one of the major character in *A Beautiful Mind* movie, John Nash.

E. Objective of the Study

Dealing with the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the film based on its structural elements by finding characters and characterizations, setting, point of view, plot and theme.
2. To analyze the film especially the main character of John Nash using the Individual Psychological Approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The study is expected to be able to provide the following benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The result of the study is expected to broaden the writer's own comprehension about Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of the larger body of knowledge, particularly literary studies on Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is dedicated to the development of literary study in Surakarta University, especially in English Department and to give deeper understanding in literary field as the reference to the other researchers in analyzing the film that is analyzed in this research into different perspectives.

G. Research Method

1. Object of the Study

The object of the study is Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie to discuss the coping behavior to cope his life problems that is reflected in the main character's personality.

2. Type of the Study

The writer uses a library research, which employs qualitative method. The writer also applies an individual psychological of the main characters as a means of further research.

3. Type of the Data and the Data Source

a. Primary Data

The primary data are taken from the texts of Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* movie, it consists of dialogue, plot, themes, conflicts, and the whole narration, etc, which are relevant to the object of the study.

b. Secondary Data

The secondary data sources are taken from some books, web sites, others literary and also other matters which support this analysis.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The writer uses library research in collecting data, which involves several steps:

- a. Searching the script of the film from internet.
- b. Reading the script repeatedly.
- c. Marking the point in the script to make easy in analyzing it.

- d. Taking notes of important in both primary and secondary data.
- e. Classifying the data into groups according categories of elements of literary study.
- f. Selecting them by rejecting the irrelevant sources, which doesn't have important information to support the topic of the study?

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The writer uses an individual psychological approach and applies it by using the descriptive analysis. In addition, the writer also uses the structural analysis of the work. Firstly, the data are arranged in a list of data. Secondly, the researcher is looking for a selecting the correlation of data by using the chosen approach. Thirdly, all data from the second step are arranged. Finally, a conclusion is drawn.

H. Paper Organization

This research paper consists of five chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which contains the background of the study, problem statement, literature review, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, limitation of the study, research method and paper organization. Chapter two is underlying theory. The third chapter is structural analysis. The fourth chapter is an individual psychological analysis of this movie and the last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.